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to a complicated figure such as a whale, and in that case an expert dancer among the guests is called upon to perform. It is announced that this is, "to make clean the road for the dead."

After each masked figure has disappeared, the sound of whistling from without grows gradually weaker, as the apparition returns whence it came. In solemn silence X takes a copper[a] which he has had in readiness, breaks it across his knee,[b] and throws it either into the fire or down on the ground in the track that the figure has taken. Then the announcer calls out loudly:

"It is for his crest.[c] It has 'made bone for the dead.'[d]" Then he continues, speaking for X and using the first person:

"My heart is glad at seeing my father.[e] At death he returned back on the path of my family's ancestors and donned our ancient crest. He now lives in *Nuxwā'a*, whence he came to visit us and whither he has now gone back."

The significance of the throwing down of a copper is entirely unknown to the modern Bella Coola, although they still perform the ritual. In some vague way it is felt that "bone," which may imply *stability*, has been provided for the deceased. The act thus appears in the light of an offering to the dead, but this sentiment is not clearly appreciated by the participants in the rite; the present has been made *for*, rather than *to*, the one being mourned.

The copper, now valueless, is picked up by any chief and given to a poor man.

After a short interval a number of youths begin to distribute presents, provided by X, which have been placed in readiness. Gifts of equal value are given to all foreign male guests; while the women receive ones less valuable. These presents

[a] One of the glories of native copper, such as were formerly known not sold and used as tokens of value by the coast tribes of British Columbia. Their employment by the Bella Coola will be described later in greater detail (I, p. 110).

[b] The breaking is sometimes omitted.

[c] That is: "For the dead man, now in form of his crest."

[d] Or whatever relative the deceased may have been.

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of metal obtained from the white man, if not actually machine-made for trading purposes. They resemble the familiar shape found in all parts of the British Columbia coast and vary in length from about six inches to as much as three feet. There is considerable difference in thickness; some of the newer ones are thin plates, others are heavy and appear to be old. The early white traders realized the value placed by the Indians on their coppers and these were soon imitated and became important articles of barter. The Bella Coola state that many of the early Hudson's Bay Company's coppers were made of drawn wire, but this type seems to have passed out of existence, since all the specimens seen in Bella Coola consisted of flat metal plaques. 556* 177 439

The Bella Coola maintain that their ancestors have, ever since the beginning of time, used two kinds of coppers. One variety, known as *tália*, resembled the plaques produced by white men. This is the term in common usage for all kinds of coppers at the present time. The other variety, *taitaimy*, is said to have been thicker and heavier and was made by beating the metal in a fire, beating it into the required shape. Long, long ago, coppers of this kind were sometimes found in the forest by hunters who were thus rewarded for observance of ceremonial chastity, but most were obtained in trade from the northern tribes. One of these is said to be preserved at Kimsquit, but none is said to have been owned by a Bella Coola within the last few years. 556* [325] [439]

The Bella Coola believe that *taitaimy* can only be manufactured in one district, far to the north, at the mouth of an unknown river. There, it is said, the chiefs range themselves along the river bank, each armed with a spear, and each with a number of slaves behind him. When the tide is highest, salmon of some peculiar kind appear at the surface of the water. If one comes within reach of a spearman, he lunges at it, but invariably misses; then the chief drops his spear, seizes one of his slaves and kills him by cutting his throat. A small piece of 59* 773

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556 773 flesh cut from the body is fastened to the point of the spear, making it so potent that when next the chief lunges at a salmon he transfixes it and brings it ashore. He warms the fish at a fire and then pounds it on a stone until it becomes a copper.

No Bella Coola has visited this distant river for many generations and the belief concerning the manufacture of *tsitsaimy* appears to have been handed down from dim antiquity. Coppers of this kind are said to have been considered much more valuable than the usual *tălia*, but were always uncommon. In addition to their ordinary uses, they had a certain curative value. If the owner of one was ill, he used to clean it [755] with a rough stone and water; then he would drink four cupfuls of the liquid which contained minute fragments of metal. In almost every case a speedy recovery followed. In all other respects *tălia* or *tsitsaimy* could be used indiscriminately.

Tălia are likewise said to have a supernatural origin. When found in the forest, they are due to the supernatural salmon-[976] like being, *tsiatl*, having changed itself into one. None has been found in recent years because the *tsiatl* have moved away owing to their dislike of the smell of human footsteps and the taint of smoke.

These stories serve to emphasize the complete ignorance of [325] the Bella Coola concerning the methods of manufacturing coppers. It is possible that long ago they were able to make their own by pounding the native metal, but if so it is surprising that some traditions to this effect were not preserved. On the other hand, there is little reason to doubt their use of [177] coppers, obtained from the northern tribes, antedating the coming of the whites. All informants agreed on this point, and the frequent references to coppers in mythology likewise point to considerable age. In many of the ancestral myths there are accounts of the obtaining of coppers by some of the [551] first people, and many ancestral names, both of men and women, are derived from them.

[237] The Bella Coola attribute the value of coppers to the fact

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of their occurrence in most ancestral myths.[4] There seems to be no mythological explanation for the casting of a copper into the fire after the passing of the representation of a deceased relative, but the desire of chiefs to use them at potlatches is the result of their use under similar circumstances by their ancestors. Some ancestral myths lack reference to coppers, but their use is common to all, whether or not embodied in such. It is said to be easier for a chief to acquire coppers if they had been used by his ancestors, but this is not essential.

When arranging for the appearance of a dead relative, the donor of a potlatch is careful either to possess a copper, or to be able to borrow one at the right moment. As soon as the masked figure has disappeared, the donor stands up, breaks or bends his copper, and throws it into the fire "to make bone for the deceased." No matter how valuable a copper may have been, it is now worthless; its value has been expended on the purpose for which it has just been employed. It lies unheeded in the flames, a valueless article belonging to no one.

At some convenient time, either hours or days later, any chief may remove the copper and give it to a poor man, only taking care to choose an individual who has not recently received one. It is said that the gift is "to patch his canoe." It is now the poor man's property, but it has no value, since no goods have been expended for it. The new owner straightens and repairs it, if necessary by riveting on the broken piece, thus making it ready for further use. The poor man may keep the copper for years, or it may be only a few weeks before some chief, preparing for a potlatch, offers, perhaps, $20, for it. In the old days, values were computed in slaves, canoes, salmon, and other commodities, but now in dollars. If two chiefs should happen to want it, the poor man may haggle about the price, though in such a case the two rivals would probably agree amicably rather than lower their dignity by seeming to be interested in a matter of money. It is to the advantage of a

[4] Abalone-shells and mountain-sheep are treasured for the same reason; the former are mentioned in several origin myths, the latter in two at least.